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SCIENCE

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THE STUDY OF THE STARS¹

THE object of the American Association is the advancement of science. This is a very different matter from the diffusion of human knowledge. The universities and colleges provide liberally for the latter subject, but neglect the former almost entirely. Science is advanced by many individuals who hold offices in the universities, but seldom as a part of their official duties. Few professors are allowed to regard research as a portion of their college work, and still less frequently are appropriations made or funds provided for original investigation. Astronomy is almost the only exception to this rule, and even here in general, the time of the officers is mainly devoted to teaching. Observatories devoted to research like McCormick, Lick and Harvard are supported by funds given specifically for their use, and receive little, or no aid, from the general funds of the universities with which they are associated. It is probable that American universities devote one hundred times as much money to the diffusion of human knowledge, as to its advancement. The great progress made in America in some departments of astronomy is due to the fact that certain wealthy men and women have been willing to give large sums of money for this object. No other country is so fortunate in this respect, although in recent years in Germany large appropriations are being made by the government for similar purposes.

The income of certain funds like the Elizabeth Thompson, Bache and Watson

¹ Address of the President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Atlanta, December 29, 1913.